2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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582 583 643 girl in compensation for some great favour shown to her father he pays bride-wealth, but he fixes the amount himself, usually double that paid by a commoner. There will, however, be no negotiation, nor would a commoner ever attempt to recover cattle of the bride-wealth that had died. The king owes no respect to mother-in-law or other relatives by marriage, who all treat him with the same reverence as do other unconnected commoners. No Shilluk woman is particularly reverential to her husband, nor would she take a beating with resigned submission, but a royal wife should kneel *with bowed head to receive a whipping should the king wish to punish* her. Mr. Heasty informs us that one wife is always appointed head wife and is treated with great respect by all, including the king himself. She acts as intermediary between the other women and the king; she is an elderly woman, usually a widow of a previous king, and holds her appointment until displaced by the king. The king would seldom take a wife from the *ororo* unless she were an unusually attractive woman, because no son of an *ororo* can ever become king.

643 644 591 The king's children are never born in Fashoda. In the fourth or fifth month of her pregnancy the expectant mother is sent with attendants and cattle to some distant village, and here she remains under the protection of the chief until the child is weaned, when she may return to Fashoda. During each subsequent pregnancy she goes to a different village. The child is brought up in its native village, and the cattle that the mother brings with her are its portion. In this village he (or she) should be buried. No special conditions are required for the selection of a locality beyond the strength and discretion of the chief under whose charge the child will grow up and the presence of good grazing ground for the royal herd.[1] Every royal son is recognized as a potential king and is treated with the utmost indulgence and respect; the royal daughters also have their privileges, but are not so highly regarded. The royal daughters are not allowed to marry, it being alleged that it would not be fitting for a woman of royal birth to marry a commoner, while she could not marry a *nyireth*, or the descendants of one, as this would be incestuous. Royal daughters may have lovers, but must not bear children. Mr. Heasty informs us that they may select whom they will, *kwareh*

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[1] Mr. Heasty considers that the reason for sending the royal wives away is that the king is ambitious for his sons and hopes that they will start villages for themselves; if they were born in Fashoda they would have no villages of their own. Foreign wives of the king are sent to Shilluk villages in the same way as are Shilluk women.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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or commoners, and even close relatives, including half-brothers by the same father, though connection with a full brother or a uterine half-brother would not be permitted. Royal daughters are treated with great respect, may exercise considerable influence in district affairs, and when elderly may help and advise the local chief, but they never become guardians of shrines as do the king's wives and widows.

We did not hear of the rivalry between princes leading to actual warfare for the throne, though considering how commonly the Shilluk quarrel among themselves this seemed probable, and some of the old traditional quarrels between North and South may have originated in such rivalry. It is related that Nyakwac killed the surviving children of his great uncle Nyadwai (the twelfth king), though three of them had already reigned before him, but we do not think this was a common practice.

The children of the king are called *nyiwok*; his grandchildren are *nyinyiwok*, and his great grandchildren are *kwanyiwok*; their children again may be called *kwanyiwok*. The four generations are regarded as of royal blood in descending degrees, and even *kwanyiwok* follow the royal practice of retaining their lower central incisors instead of having them knocked out as commoners do, but the children of *kwanyiwok* are treated as commoners. The descendants of the king form a privileged group; both sons, grandsons, and their children are called *kwarok*. The title *kwanyiwok dwong* (great *kwanyiwok*) is given to the first generation of *kwanyiwok* or to a *kwanyiwok* who has become a chief.

Apart from the king and the royal family, but having the closest ceremonial connection with the former, are the *orore*,[1] who trace their origin to the fifth Shilluk king, Ocalo. They play a prominent part

[1] Rightly qualified by Mr. Moore as a "clue . . . full of mystery" in his "Installation of the Nor of the Choi (King of the Shilluks)", which we reprint as an appendix. They certainly require further study. Hofmayr states that royal descendants become *orore* after a special degradation ceremony which has to be carried out by zeuhls. His account is far from clear, but officially he agrees that the *only orore* are the descendants of Ocalo (op. cit., pp. 280–1). Mr. Hoarey confirms this, and in answer to our questions obtained the following account of the origin of the *orore*. During the reign of king Ocalo there was trouble between the Nuer and Shilluk. The sons of Ocalo, who led the Shilluk against the Nuer, were all killed except Dowad, considered very insignificant by the king, who felt that there would be no chance of one of his offspring reigning since all his important sons had been killed. In a rage Ocalo took the sacred spears of Nyakang and threw them in the river, but Dowad succeeded in rescuing the last and demanded of his father why he did this. When Ocalo answered that his sons were dead, a quarrel ensued between father and son, leading Dowad to say that the sacrifices to his father should not be killed with a spear and to threaten to degrade his father's descendants. When Dowad became king his half-brothers were degraded to the level of commoners, with the name Nyigid instead of their previous appellation Kayo. As compensation they were granted an important part in the installation and funerary rites of the king, as well as in certain religious ceremonies at Fashoda.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

III. FAMILY LIFE.

MARRIAGE

When a young man wants to marry, he himself asks the girl he has selected; if she assents, she directs her lover to her parents and the old people of the village; if these also do not object, they ask him to bring the dowry, which consists of cattle. From four to six head of oxen and one milch cow is the ordinary price for a woman, besides a number of sheep and goats. But the whole of this dowry is in most cases not paid to the father-in-law at once, before the marriage takes place. One ox is paid to the elders of the village when they arrange the marriage business, one or more at the celebration of the marriage, another when the first child is born. The ox which is slaughtered at the marriage festival is driven to the village of the bride by all the young men of the bridegroom's village. They decorate this ox by tying tassels of cows' tails on the top of the horns. In case the horns have not a good shape for tying these tassels, they are pierced and the tassels are fastened in the holes. A young man in buying an ox is always particular about the shape of the horns for this reason. On the marriage festival vide page 109. — A man cannot reach a social position without being married, and he cannot get a wife without cattle; so every young Shilluk's highest ambition consists in procuring cattle in order to buy a wife. But, as already mentioned, they usually marry before the full dowry is paid, and in such a case the debts of the young husband may become the source of quarrels between husband and wife, and still more between husband and father-in-law. As long as the price is not paid, the father has a legal right to take his daughter back from her husband; but this, though often threatened, is seldom done. Those who have sufficient means will as a rule not be satisfied with one wife, but marry a second and a third; only a very few exceed this number.

A young man may not marry a girl from his own division or clan, (vide page 127 ff.) but from any other division; the girl may live in the same village or in any other village, but they prefer to marry in a distant village. These marriage laws are a well established tribal custom, and people fear to break them, lest death follow marriage.

POSITION OF WOMEN

The position of the woman is no doubt a higher one than with most Mohammedan peoples of the Sudan. She is generally well treated and is shown remarkable respect. The women sometimes take part in public assemblies with the men, discuss the affairs that interest them and partake in dances and religious ceremonies. Even in their war-dances the women play an active *rôle*, vide page XXXIX. — If refractory or lazy, the man may give his wife a thrashing with a rope.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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right to the throne. If all the sons of a King die, before it is the turn of one of them to become king, that family loses its royal prerogatives. A left-handed or otherwise deformed man cannot be crowned. When from such or a similar reason the son of a king fails to be crowned, his posterity loses the right to the throne.

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As a rule only a man can be king; though once a queen reigned, she apparently did not command a great authority, vide page 149; and it is characteristic that in the lists given by Bamboldser and Dr. Giffen her name is not mentioned.

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The way in which the king is elected, vide page 122 ff. Of course frequently party intrigues are at work on those occasions, and it may have been not quite an uncommon occurrence that there were several candidates for the throne, supported by different factions; sometimes there were even two kings, residing in different places of the country.

POWER OF THE KING [651]

The power of the king was, previous to the British occupation, absolute; he disposed on life and death of his subjects. The subjects had to pay heavy taxes in cattle, dura, boats, skins for clothes, and under certain circumstances, in persons also.

JURISDICTION 691 693 685

All judicial cases may be brought before the king, with whom lies the final decision. They have an unwritten code of law, providing fixed penalties and fines. Cattle thieves were formerly killed on the spot by the owner of the stolen property. If the thief escaped, but was located with the stolen thing, the owner demanded it. In case the thief refused to give it up and the owner was unable to get it by force, he then reported to his chief, and if he failed there, the matter went to the king, who punished the man perhaps by taking his property and some girls from his village for himself.

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In the case of certain infractions of the law the convict became the slave of the king, and could no more return to his home. Those slaves are known as *tyni ocyk* ("men of crime") or *odjyg*. The king gives to such a man a wife. Their children are slaves at the royal court and are called *odjyg*. To the male descendants of such the king gives wives, and the females are taken to be given to male members of the *odjyg* class as wives. If the king does not have enough girls in the *odjyg* class to supply all the young men with wives, he buys free girls for the purpose, their descendants become also slaves.

In some cases the criminal becomes the slave of a chief; these are also called *odjyg*.

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Murder cases were tried by a court of chiefs and the king. If the man was condemned, he was disgraced in many ways before the people. Sometimes he was led about the village with a cow-rope around his neck, and then executed by hanging. If a man was executed on account of a crime, his whole family

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

daughter, would marry out of the lineage, and her bridewealth would be used to marry a wife from elsewhere. I can quote no actual instances of this custom, but it is in keeping with Shilluk ideas, and I believe it to have been common in the past. The indemnity is known in Shilluk as *ot/ dhom*, ' the replacement of a man '. Although the Shilluk do not have an institution comparable to the Nuer and Dinka custom of ' ghost-marriage ',[1] they certainly consider that the continuity of the kinship group must be assured and the acceptance of an indemnity is primarily directed to this object. A wife married with ' blood-cattle ' is called *nya wic dhom*, ' the girl in place of the man ',[2] and although she is not married specifically ' to the name of the dead man ', as would be the case among both Nuer and Dinka, the principles are the same. The primary intention in accepting such payments in cattle is therefore to marry a wife into the dead man's lineage, or to acquire a girl who will either be taken in marriage or received as a daughter from whom bridewealth may be expected. Since bridewealth among the Shilluk is more or less rigidly maintained at ten head of cattle, it is logical that the indemnity for homicide should also be ten.

Among many Nilotic peoples in the past there were different rates of compensation for the taking of human life according to the status of the person killed. Among the Shilluk a greater differentiation might be expected, but there is little evidence of this, though Shilluk themselves say that to kill a member of the royal clan would be a serious offence and in the past was likely to call forth a punitive expedition by the *reth*. It is significant that Hofmayr says: ' To wound a royal prince or princess, or a royal daughter or son of a prince, whether it happens accidentally or intentionally, demands a high penalty for the shedding of royal blood (*a mam*). In 1912 a boy accidentally injured a royal daughter with a spear and caused only a slight flesh wound. He had to pay six head of cattle (two or three to the King, one to the mother of the girl, and one to the Chief of the village).'

There is normally no distinction in the amount of compensation demanded for the death of a woman. A husband who kills his wife is not expected to pay compensation if he has completed the bridewealth payments. When a woman kills someone, her father or legal guardian is held responsible if she is unmarried; a husband is responsible for the actions of his wife.

As among other Nilotic peoples, when homicide is a joint action, the first man to cause injury to the deceased is held to be responsible for his death.

In the peacemaking negotiations described, the ritual acts and ceremonial procedures are reminiscent of those performed by the ' Leopard-Skin Chief ' among the Nuer, and the ' Chief of the Spear ' among many Dinka tribes. These similarities are seen in the public ceremonies rather than in the special ritual performed to relieve the killer of the spiritual contamination which is believed to follow an act of homicide; this is not surprising, since obviously the *reth* could not deal individually with every killer. Further, it is customary for these functionaries among both Nuer and Dinka to take a small proportion[3] of the ' blood-cattle ' in return for their services;

[1] See Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*, pp. 109–11. Oxford, 1951.

[2] Mr. J. L. Baker tells me that children born in such circumstances are known as *okir ot okir* (*okir* according to use) which means literally '*father dead*'.

[3] For example, out of a total varying between twenty and forty head of cattle, the Nuer *kwar kwac* takes the *yang kwiai* in return for his services early on in the negotiations for peace, the *reath nam* (' bull calf of blood ') and *yang kwac* (' cow of the leopard-skin '), besides two oxen which he sacrifices at the ceremony. In some parts of Nuerland these might

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

will get her a calf-skin. The mother of the girl is supposed to tie the calf-skin the first time the girl wears it to a dance. If her mother is dead, then a woman the same age as her mother ties it for her.

Some Begging Customs of the Women.

The Shilluk women seem to derive much pleasure from begging for cattle from some of the richer men of the tribe. The occasion is made a holiday for the women of the village, and they go forth in their finest clothes. If the recipient of their honour lives at some distance, the start is made early in the morning, and all the women of the village go. If there are too many women in the village, then the women of a certain age go. The women of two different villages will not unite to go on these expeditions. The proper season for these begging dances is just before the rains begin, though they may be held any time during the dry season.

The women decide upon the man to be honoured by their party before they start. Occasionally, they honour a man from their own village, but in that case they only ask for a sheep. Often they go five or six miles, and sometimes they go as far as fifteen or twenty miles. While they are gone the men must stay at home to care for the babies. Often, on such occasions, a mother will leave a tiny baby at home for the whole day. Usually, they object to leaving their babies at home, but for this event it is different.

The man to be honoured is not warned, lest he hide from them. Should the man they are seeking be absent from the village, the women hang a string of beads made from the shell of the ostrich egg (rek) in the enclosure between his two houses. When he returns, he says, "Who brought this rek?" His wife replies, "The women brought it." He asks, "What do they want?" His wife replies, "An ox." His wife says "They will return." He says, "They will find nothing." His wife replies, "So many should have something, I have children, so many women should not be refused by red lips." When the women return they usually get the ox.

Before the women start on such a trip they choose a leader, unless they already have one. She is called a bŋña. She has the powers of a magistrate. If any trouble occurs among the women, she acts as judge. She is crowned with the rek, as the chief of the village is crowned. In

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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future expeditions of the same party she will be chief. In the village she has the right to judge cases that are strictly between women.

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A man may refuse to give an ox, making the excuse that he has nothing to give. Then the women will mutter, saying, "He kills us by making us stand in the hot sun." They seem to think he is cheating them. The man's wife may intercede on their behalf. She will put on her husband's cloth, put a rek about her neck, anoints her body with oil, and then takes the chief's spear, and dances among the women. For such a display the chief will usually relent, and tell his young men to bring out the ox. He may be very churlish, and refuse to give them what they desire. They depart, muttering curses on him and his family. If in a short time sickness should occur in his family it is attributed to the ill-will of these women. He sends a messenger to call them. They come and get the ox. He then tells them of the sickness in his family, and the women order ashes to be brought. The women fill their hands with the ashes. They then pray after this manner, "You are God. We were refused an ox by this chief. He now has sickness. We are no longer angry at him. Permit him to escape." Next they spit on the ashes they hold in their hands, and then sprinkle them all over the members of his household. The women then depart, and the patient recovers.

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When the women go to a chief and he gives them an ox, they sprinkle ashes about his house as a blessing. The ox is taken to their village, and it may be killed immediately, though it is more likely to be kept for a time. When the animal is killed the brisket is given to the old men of the village. The old women take the rump, and the younger women divide the remainder of the meat.

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A man is glad to have the women come to beg from him, even when he refuses to give them what they desire. It is a great compliment to have the women come, as it shows that his fame has spread abroad as a rich and generous man. Then, too, the ceremony is such as to feed the vanity of the man singled out for the honour. The women usually rush up to the house shouting and singing his praises. They sing songs about his bravery, and tell of his virtues, but the chorus of their song usually is: "Brother, lead out that ox."

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After a chief has given an ox, the women go away saying that he is a fine man, and a great chief. The women seem to demand a great deal. Once in a case observed, the ox was given. The women did not watch

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

to be their duty to aid him. The arrangement is merely reciprocal. At the beer feast afterwards, however, the guests are arranged according to their respective sub-divisions. The two senior sub-divisions present enter the hut of their host before the others and it is their privilege to taste the beer first and approve it. They remain in the hut for sometime for they have had an exhausting day in the fields and are thirsty. Outside the hut in the courtyard are grouped the lower sub-divisions, eagerly awaiting their share which is passed out to them when those inside are satisfied with the quality of the beer. Possibly another sub-division is then allowed to enter the hut if there is room at the back.

The sub-divisions are grouped inside the hut in ascending order of seniority and the leader of the senior sub-division present, (*Pagy*) sits near the door. The *Pagy* has a special gourd which is kept full of beer by the man next him. Etiquette is rigidly observed and every-one is careful to sit in the right place and take his turn at the beer. No women are present except the host's wife or wives who sit at the back and serve the beer. Every age-set has its own song and this is sung by those inside the hut while the young men outside take up the chorus.

The existence within the settlement of organised age-sets limited by territorial boundaries is a factor which should ensure co-ordination and peace between the different lineages. The Shilluk say that age-mates will not fight each other. In fact this is an exaggeration for the sense of loyalty and mutual obligation between age-mates is not constant or strong. The reason for this is the rarity of occasions in which the age-set organization functions to-day and the very limited purpose to which it is put. In reality, mutual ties and observances practiced by age-mates are quite outside the deeper and more permanent ties of kinship and the Shilluk is not bothered by perpetually conflicting emotions. The age-sets do not operate as such until all lineages are bound together by a common cause apart from and in a different context to internal bickerings which are not infrequent.

Political authority is not now derived from the age-set system, but from the powerful position in the settlement of the dominant lineage.

INSTALLATION OF A NEW SHILLUK KING

[The following account, by a Shilluk pupil at Rumbek Secondary School, originally appeared in the *Rumbek Magazine* for 1954, and is reprinted with the permission of the Ministry of Education. It is, so far as is known, the first written account of the ceremony by a member of the Shilluk people. The article has been read by Dr. P. P. Howell, who considered it to be of sufficient interest to warrant publication in *Sudan Notes and Records*.]

When the Reth of the Shilluk dies, all the senior chiefs of the thirteen divisions of the country are summoned to Fashoda, the chief reigning village (pan duong), by the District Commissioner and the Head Chief of Fashoda Division, to attend the election of the new Reth.

The new Reth is not to be elected from among the late Reth's sons, but from another branch of the Royal Family. In the election the elder son of a Reth and a left-handed Prince cannot be elected, according to traditional custom. A woman has no claim to the Rethship. It happened once in the past that there was one Queen called Abudhok who reigned in Fashoda, but from thenceforward no woman has held the Rethship.

As soon as the Nyireth (Prince) is elected Reth he is taken to Fashoda, where he remains quietly until the late Reth's wuowo (mourning dance) has been held. After this, the installation of the new Reth, or the coronation ceremony, follows. Before the coronation the people of Padhiang, north-west of Fashoda, are sent to the Nuba mountains to fetch some holy bamboos which are used in the coronation, and the blacksmiths of Golbanyo at the northern side of Fashoda, and those of Nyinkango and Both in the south, are busy making the coronation spears. First comers from among the Nyikango's army (Kwanyikwom) pass to Obay in the southern part of the country to bring some palm leaves for making whips with which they beat people during the coronation. In Debalo Kwom there are some people carving ivories. The performers of the coronation fix some branches of thorn trees in front of their villages on the roads, being authorized by tradition to stop any man passing along that road without his giving an offering to them. The people of Tonga paddle far south in their canoes to Lake No to fetch the ambatch (abomi Nyikango).

After the accomplishment of all these things, the Reth is taken to Debalo Kwom south of Fashoda, a village where the coronation seat is kept. In Debalo there is a little herd of cattle from Pathaw which the Reth looks after, and he is treated roughly like a small boy by the head chief of Debalo, before he takes his position as Reth. Nobody is allowed to go among these cows or to take any fire from among them. Any unfortunate fellow going near them is seized by Kwa Nyuth and made to give something. These cows go together with the Reth to Fashoda where he looks after them again.

In this installation there are two rival armies, the army of the Reth and the army of Nyikango. Nyikango's army brings the images of Nyikango and Duk his son from Akurwa, a village in the northern part of the country. Without the power of Nyikango and Duk the new king cannot be crowned. When the party leaves Akurwa they have four resting places before they reach Fashoda. In the last, Adot Nyigir, two miles from Fashoda, they await the arrival of the Reth's army from Debalo.

[1] Nyikango was the founder of the Shilluk Kingdom. At his death he is said not to have been buried but to have disappeared in the sky.

[p. 99]

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

756 good fee. It will not be less than two sheep, a fighting spear, a fish spear, a hoe, and a cloth. The patient is then assigned to a separate house.

Both men and women are eligible to become servants of the king, but [562 the women predominate. This ceremony does not release a woman from 593] her husband, but when they become old they may wander about, and follow other men.

People who are not in sympathy with the ceremony are not readily admitted to see the performance. Some say that the hand is held in the boiling oil or butter, but others say that it is barely touched to the oil.

An indication of the fact that the power of Nikawng among the Shilluks is not as great as their professions would indicate, is furnished by comparing the servants of the king with the witch doctors. They work along the same lines, but the powers of the witch doctors are greater. The possessed are supposed to be holy, but they are among the most lustful of the people. They make greater claim to personal piety than the witch doctors, but their lives are no better.

[462] The women of this class are much more active than the men, who are usually idlers.

[726] They are able to give protection, for when a fight is imminent one is called to sprinkle ashes on the warriors, and Nikawng is invoked thus, «Nikawng, this village has your ashes on it, do not give it to death».

[787] They are also able to foretell future events. They often profess to be surprised at their own messages, and they are able to get into communication with the dead.

The chief work of the servants of the king is to cure disease. The so-called cures are nearly always of a magical nature.

775 The spirit of the king may not always be active in the afflicted person,
776 but it comes and goes. When a servant of the king under the power of the
756 spirit makes a statement he is not responsible for what he says, as it is merely a manifestation of the king, but if he does a wrong act under the same guidance, he is held responsible.

756 The actual workings of the servants of the king are not easy to witness, as they do not like to work before a hostile gathering. The tales of their cures told by eye witnesses vary, as they are influenced by their faith or lack of faith in the power of the medium. A few illustrations may be given

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

of mud, assume enormous proportions, becoming rather like the wide ears of an elephant. When they become too cumbersome he tires of them and has them cut off; he may then adopt another style, but as a rule the fires of youth have by this died down and he is content to leave his hair in its natural state.

Other highly esteemed hair-styles are the 'Cherry Pie', when the hair all over the head is moulded tightly into little red balls; the 'Cock's Comb' extending in a raised ridge from the crown of the head to the forehead while the rest is shaven, and the 'Hat Brush'. One day my houseboy appeared before my startled eyes with his head clean shaven save for a long elliptical patch of hair which he had dyed (with, I suspected, the Sisters' laundry blue) a brilliant blue colour. Again, a brave will sometimes scorn all such fripperies, and shave his head completely, polish it with oil and bind a string of flat blue beads around his forehead, achieving the effect of a decorated chocolate Easter egg.

As is usual in the East it is the male who wears the fine plumage while the female is subdued, if not indeed drab, in her colouring. A Shilluk girl makes no attempt to imitate the gorgeous decoration of her brother; her dirty grey cloth she may hem with an embroidered pattern in beads, and she may bedeck also with coloured beads the little apron she wears around her waist, but apart from a string of beads around her neck or arm and an iron or copper bangle, that is the only finery she will allow herself. She rarely paints her face or dresses her hair. On the occasion of a dance she will change her everyday cloth for a blue one or a mantle of deer skin, anoint her shaven head with oil and trick herself out with a few more beads, and having gone as far as fashion allows will rely upon personal charm to win her admirers.

The origins of the Shilluk people are not known with any degree of certainty. It would seem from their affinity, especially in language, with the Jur tribe of the Southern Sudan and with the Luo of the Bahr-el-Gazal and Kenya

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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312 Aguno I stopped to watch a couple of men stretching and [281] scraping a cow hide. One of them called to a girl in the village, his wife or sister, to bring him some water to soften the skin. With great reluctance she brought a large bowlful and stood by, while with lavish hand the man splashed the precious water on skin and ground indiscriminately. He then demanded more and I thought, and hoped, that she would refuse; that she would remind him that she had walked eleven burning miles to bring the water that he threw away so thoughtlessly. After a moment's hesitation, however, she picked up the bowl he had thrown at her feet and turned slowly towards the hut, but as she did so I saw two tears overflow from her brimming eyes and roll down her cheeks. Such [562] drudgery is forced on these womenfolk by circumstance and custom, and we can only wish that things were in some way bettered.

361 But now let us proceed and see what a Shilluk village is [487] like. We enter it along a little path which leads from the main road and passes through the dried up, yellow stubble of last season's millet plantation.

Passing through the space between the fences of two [367] neighbouring homesteads, we come upon a large level circle of bare ground which is the playground of the village [535] and its dancing floor. Sometimes it boasts a tree, green and leafy in contrast to its dun, dusty surroundings, under the refreshing shade of which the village elders gather to discuss [521] the affairs of their little world: the price of cattle, the failure of the harvest, the prospect of the fishing. Under the tree, too, [534] or at the further side of the dancing floor, are two large forked stakes driven into the ground to hold the drums. Around this circular central space the family dwellings are grouped.

[621] Villages vary in size, from the small hamlet consisting of two or three homesteads to a large settlement of sixty or seventy. An average-sized village contains about thirty families. All, however, are set up on the same plan, and the houses are built according to the same pattern. Each house-351 hold consists of two houses set facing one another in a small

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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ment so much as endurance that is called for at a Shilluk dance. 535 881

The festivities are opened by a salute of the warriors to the assembled chiefs. The leader of the band approaches carrying a bowl of dust and asks the senior chief present or the leading guest to bless the dance; he takes a little dust [788] from the bowl and sprinkles it on the ground while calling down a blessing on the gathering. Then the warriors who are congregated at the opposite end of the field thunder forward with whoops and cries, their spears uplifted to strike, the lust of killing in their eyes; they stop dead in their tracks when the spears of the front rank are but a foot away from the row of chiefs and guests, and a roar of laughter goes up if they succeed in making anyone flinch. A second wave follows the first and so on, until with the onslaught of the last group this phase of the dance ends. The beat of the drums now quickens its tempo, spears are discarded in favour of dancing sticks and ambach shields, and the girls come forward to claim partners. A girl may take part in the [562] dance almost at any age, so that little girls of not more than twelve years of age are found taking their places in the long lines being formed. The dancers arrange themselves two abreast, the boys facing the girls; the boys stand with arms bent and sticks held upright, the girls hold themselves rigid with their arms pressed close to their sides. As three hundred pairs of feet thud down in unison, the ground seems to shake and dust rises in clouds; the drums throb, feet thump, the metal shells clash and bells clang, male voices yell hoarsely and female trill—the din is indescribable. The long lines circle slowly round the dancing floor, the boys jumping forward and the girls backward; in a concerted movement the girls raise their arms as if to ward off a blow and make a turn, first to the left, then to the right, while their male partners make the same half turns, bringing their sticks and shields over the girls' heads to protect them, as it were, from the threatened attack. This movement which is done at every dozen or so steps is the only variation in the monotonous jumping of the dance. A rest is called when the drummers

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funeral or some such occasion calling for special feasting. 231
It would tax the ingenuity of a European to devise a system, and keep a battery of clerks in constant employment and a filing cabinet in constant use to keep an up-to-date check on the wanderings of the various animals of any one bride-herd. Not so with the simple Shilluk however. Inside his woolly [181]
head—admittedly not particularly concerned with anything that does not pertain to cattle—he keeps all the details of each individual cow in his herd. He knows all their comings in and goings out, all their risings up and their sittings down. Each cow has a special and distinctive colour and each colour a special and distinctive name and he knows them all and can describe them in detail. He can tell you offhand the life history of any cow; its previous owners as it passed from dowry to dowry eventually to become a member of his, and when he has parted with it, he follows its subsequent career with unflagging interest, can name the various people who have had it since it left his ownership and knows just where it can be found at any given time.

Our young benedict is now happily married and settled 593
down to a life of connubial bliss. But among the Shilluk, as among their more sophisticated Western brethren, the course of true love does not always run smooth. The lady, who in the eyes of her lord is a mere chattel, something that he has bargained and paid for, must prove that she is up to standard. [562]
Not indeed that a Shilluk wife becomes the absolute slave of her husband, bearing all the burdens of the day and the heats, while he passes the rest of his days in slothful idleness. Far from it. Both have their recognized duties and one will [462]
assist the other should occasion call for it; thus the wife will at times assist her husband with the planting, weeding and reaping, whilst he does not consider it beneath his dignity to nurse the baby while his spouse is making the daily trip to the river for water, or to sit for hours monotonously agitating a gourd of milk in the hope that eventually it will turn into butter. But the primary duty of a Shilluk wife is to become a 586
Shilluk mother, and if perchance she proved to be barren

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in the school, knowing that re-entrance was barred to them if they ran away, and sensing what the coldness of their reception at the family dinner table would be if they returned at such a time, elected to stay, and found that actually gozintas and all that could be fun. They remained for that year and came back for more the following year. Numbers grew year by year until the happy day in mid-January 1946 when I had to turn applicants away through lack of room.

At the time of writing the Shilluk have become far more education-conscious, and all our schools can now be filled without any difficulty. Indeed the problem has now become that of finding sufficient room and teachers for all who apply. Even girls are coming forward in increasing numbers. The reader may have noticed that so far there has been mention only of boys. In 1940, girl education was but an idle dream. Now each mission has its separate girls' school in the care of the Sisters, and so the prospects for the future Christianizing of the Shilluk are thereby considerably enhanced.